



ONTOLOGICA

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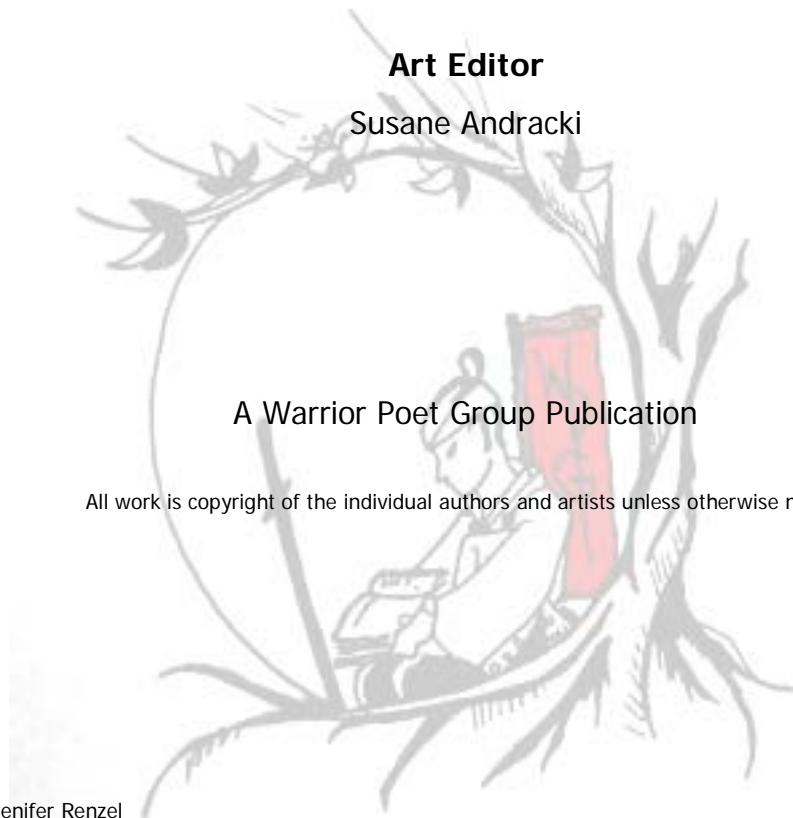
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Calliope



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Interview with Visual Artist Jenifer Renzel

1. *What is your process?*

I have two approaches for starting a project. Sometimes a piece starts with a single object that just screams to be made into something. I've come across pieces of driftwood that look like bodies, or boxes/cases that seem perfect for holding a certain type of scene or story, and I've found old dolls and toys that want to be deconstructed and reconstructed into something more interesting. At other times, I get a specific idea of a scene I want to create, and looking for the main components is a big part of the initial push. Regardless of which approach gets me started, the closing process involves dragging out tons of different objects and trying them out in the piece, building, rejecting, starting over, and finally deciding when the piece is done, which isn't always easy.

2. *Where do you grab your inspirations from?*

My best ideas come when letting my mind wander before bedtime, when working out, and when traveling. I also like pinterest for a quick look at numerous examples of good art. A well put-together pinterest board can be a great source of inspiration. Sometimes my inspirations just come out of nowhere. I've always had an active imagination that is good at popping up pictures for me.

3. *What can we expect to see from you in the future?*

I have not done a really large piece, and I'd like to try that at some point. A fellow artist suggested that I try something floor-standing, more like an installation piece.

I would also like to do some themed series', but I haven't really figured out what the underlying thread would be. This is something that I will most likely pursue soon.

4. What impact/footprint would you like to see your work leave in the world?

A main goal is just to make people happy for the few moments while they are engaged in an art piece, seeing it through their own filter and imagining the story it tells . I also feel really satisfied when other artists say they are inspired by my work, particularly if they are from different disciplines and haven't tried assemblage before. Another more selfish goal would be garner enough recognition to be able to support myself as a full time artist. I'm currently doing art in my spare time while working full time as a technical writer at a software company here in Silicon Valley.

Puppet Master



Repetition and Ideal Femininity: Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique" as Anticipatory of Kierkegaard's Aesthetics

Introduction

First, I would like to qualify the content to follow. This undertaking focuses on the idealization of femininity present within Hector Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique" and Søren Kierkegaard's aesthetic works (namely *Repetition* and *The Seducer's Diary*). The artist, the young man, and Johannes the Seducer (respectively the protagonists of these works) are all stricken with a romantic disorder known as "the ideal vision." What is this disorder, exactly? The ideal vision is a regard for the beloved which far exceeds her *actual* qualities; it is an elevation past temporality itself. Hence, it is not merely one's *preference* for the beloved, or even one's belief that she surpasses all others. —The ideal vision places the beloved in a paradigmatic role more akin to that of a goddess than an actual person. Insofar as it supplants a person's actual qualities with those definitively beyond what she is *capable* of experiencing, the ideal vision is indeed a disorder.

But how does one identify this affliction? Essentially, the ideal vision retains three possible symptoms; the first of which entails a lack of *particular* attributes for the beloved, when depicted. One glorifies her beauty in a fashion unprecedented without revealing one single characteristic. This portrayal is indeed appropriate, given that the ideal is not subject to any worldly restraint. Secondly, if her specific features *are* provided, one illustrates them so poetically that one's very reason for doing so appears tangible. In other words, one easily perceives that no individual who simply loves another would undergo such exertion to betray her appearance. Thirdly, and perhaps most distinctly, the ideal vision excites one to depict only the beloved's influence—how strongly her beauty *affects* one, as opposed to her true character.

After identifying, by way of these symptoms, the ideal vision within each of the aforementioned works, I will uncover the main discrepancy between Kierkegaard's aesthetic

writings and the "Symphonie Fantastique." Essentially, this point of contrast is that both of Kierkegaard's protagonists (the young man in *Repetition* and Johannes in *The Seducer's Diary*) choose to *withdraw* from the beloved, having understood that she herself is not actually loved. Berlioz's artist, however, resolves only to *pursue* his beloved; and consequently her dominion over him becomes excessively pronounced. There is within this symphony an immutable trajectory, wherein the more aggressively he pursues her, the quicker she slips, as it were, through his fingertips.

Note to Reader:

This is not a scientific work. Those expecting to read “facts” will surely be disappointed. Much has been written on the purely musical elements of Berlioz’s “Symphonie Fantastique”—and in my opinion, it is time for something else.

This is a work of imagination. That distinction is meant neither to “distinguish” nor disqualify the content, only to *qualify*.

With the exception of a few occasions, I will not defend my views on what is happening, so it might be “useful” to attend the following:

1. It is essential that Berlioz’s artist falls “desperately”¹ in love. This portrayal clearly indicates a readiness for pursuit, as opposed to falling “hopelessly” in love, for example. —And so he pursues her desperately.
2. The artist’s “desperate” pursuit of his beloved *never* indicates awareness of the disorder, but on the contrary reveals, through its very nature, that he is ignorant enough to maintain such a normal effort, as if she were not idealized.
3. It is reasonable to assume his efforts do not stop or lessen, if he does not recognize pursuit as inherently flawed. What else could stop a person *desperately* in love?

¹ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 15. Print.

Part One: Erotic Idealization

First Movement—"Reveries, Passions"

1. Natural Precedence

In beginning, it is appropriate to consider (as Berlioz did) the natural inception of daily events, and those occurrences themselves induced by a sunrise. Along with the various responses to a day's unfolding, sunrise itself is repetitive, and so people often fall victim to expectation; which is to say, they rely on the arrival of morning as if it were some inexhaustible resource guarded by nightfall. One need only venture a short distance—out from under one's roof, during "the hour when day struggles with night, when even in midsummer a cold shudder goes through nature,"² to recognize that sunrise is in fact a *struggle*, a purely vulnerable emergence. Each day begins with a weak light never identical to that of the previous morning, followed by a sunrise the colors of which are entirely unforeseen. These qualities always change, but the cycle governing morning and night, their usurpation of one another, is repetitive. If only contingencies are susceptible to change, as is generally understood, then sunrise offers no exception—but remains indeed a struggle. Much depends upon this arrival perceived "in the clammy morning fog and the dew-damp grass,"³ and sunrise thus affects gratitude within one for the *possibility* of such repetition.

The "Symphonie Fantastique" opens hesitantly via inchoate phrases. Dreary initiations are replaced quickly by silence as audibility strives to defeat emptiness. Here, just as Kierkegaard depicted, light "struggles" to overthrow darkness, morning slowly expels the night. Through fifteen successive measures the battle ensues, achieving for Berlioz a monotonous effect that prolongs anticipation within the listener who now has become anxious concerning its outcome. High-range, torpid phrases exude from the strings, only to molder abruptly, dispersing into nothing. Such a tedious opposition soon appears interminable, as if neither

² Kierkegaard, Søren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 140. Print.

³ Ibid.

force will prevail. Presently the tone is set for a most unusual symphony, one of desultory composition and resultantly burdensome listening. Sunrise—at last the victor—takes place in measure sixteen, but it is fleeting and thus easily mistakable. The deep and resonating tone, however, evokes a primordial impression, like one final glimpse of dawn's ominous shadows before illumination.

Once completed, sunrise gains exigency from its witness; the captivating elements of ascent are subordinated to daily obligation. Simply put, those engrossed in viewing first light now recall that certain tasks demand involvement.

Early in the morning, I lie in hiding in the shelter of the brush.
When life begins to stir, when the sun opens its eye, when the
bird shakes its wings, when the fox steals out of its cave, when
the farmer stands in his doorway and gazes out over the fields,
when the milkmaid walks with her pail down to the meadow,
when the reaper makes his scythe ring and entertains himself with
this prelude, which becomes the day's and the task's refrain—then
the young girl also appears.⁴

Indeed, not a moment is wasted by the *artist's* neighbors who presumably arose, like he, just before daybreak, observed the final instances of "struggle," and then resolved themselves to such duties as Kierkegaard espied. Measure seventeen—*immediately* following that of sunrise—portrays the "milkmaid walking with her pail down to the meadow," the "reaper making his scythe ring," and similar activities through frolicsome use of strings in astoundingly high range.⁵ At this time, one can easily picture a group of country workers spilling out of their homes in eager fashion toward the craggy, recently-tousled fields that steadily devour intensity and, with it, awareness of nearly all else.

Berlioz's portrayal of sunrise within a single measure ironically allows for tracking of the ascent itself unrestricted. While ominous notes climb in register, testing low-range boundaries, so too does the sun escalate until it suddenly reaches eminence and, holding the sun's passage marked, this heightened pitch levels off. As an *ephemeral* occurrence, sunrise demands that

⁴ Kierkegaard, Søren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 168. Print.

⁵ Especially so when compared to the previous sixteen measures.

one be mindful of its finite nature, for there is of course a basic dependence on the light which motivates approval; however, it is accordingly misguided to rely, in the strictest sense,⁶ on what is also purely dependent. This is to say, the fleeting quality of sunrise only reinforces its vulnerability, and causes more anxiety over the next. Despite how intensely one looks for it, knowing that one's experience depends upon sunrise, it arrives without certainty that repetition will persist. One may expel the vagary that daybreak is inevitable by viewing night's resistance, the contended ingress of the sun, but still there is another unfortunate tendency: *to forget its importance once action begins*.

Having risen to view the morning's arrival, which is a giving of thanks for same, one then clasps the instrument of choice, and begins laboring. The question now becomes: will one remain grateful for occasion itself, or will an immersion in one's business repel the thought? Far too often one's actions disclose the latter, and this is at least partially due to weariness. It is indeed tempting to focus exclusively on individual tasks, given that few require a less than strenuous effort; but undeterred by one's attempts to forget constraint, *actuality renders nearly all work impossible without the light of day*.

Moreover, nightfall brings graver results to one's experience than loss of daylight, and Levinas describes this phenomenon best.

When the forms of things are dissolved in the night, the darkness of the night, which is neither an object nor the quality of an object, invades like a presence...The things of the day world do not in the night become the source of the "horror of darkness" because our look cannot catch them in their "unforeseeable plots"; on the contrary, they get their fantastic character from this horror.⁷

While true enough that night does not merely constitute the absence of day, it also stands to reason that such "horrors" are usually withheld by daylight. Like a thief in the night, one tears forth into broad day, keeping only a scintilla of guilt for having become so terribly overwhelmed. One may endure the "horror of darkness" insofar as dawn's shadows look promising, but sunrise is not just a certain type of repetition, replacing another; it must not be

⁶ Meaning to count on, or swear by.

⁷ Levinas, Emmanuel. Existence and Existents. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1978. 52-54. Print.

treated as *part* of one's experience. Sunrise is rather the *emergence* of light itself, the very beginning of daily events; and thus it is a reflection of this world, upon Creation.

Kierkegaard rightly asserts that "if God himself had not willed repetition, the world would not have come into existence."⁸ But since God neither "followed the superficial plans of hope" nor "retracted everything and preserved it in recollection," the world *does* exist, "and it continues because it is a repetition."⁹ Each sunrise marks this world's transition back to itself—that God empowers it to overthrow night. With daybreak it becomes apparent that darkness only removed one's general sense of the world temporarily as light suddenly returns, restoring form to its objects. The gratitude felt during such events reveals one's very dependence upon them. *If one is to carry out tasks which complete the morning, and leave behind the terrors of night, then sunrise must first prove victorious, yet again.* Therefore, one must harbor that particular morning's arrival—with all its vulnerability—in recollection, so as to ensure that it never gets relied upon; but more importantly, in doing so one's gratitude is also preserved.

Gratitude prompts one to retain the sunrise, thereby keeping intact a remembrance of those contingencies (nightfall, God's will, everyday tasks, and others) which, by their perceived vulnerability, make gratitude possible. This motivation must never be lost within the act that follows it, for gratitude is the *only* genuine response to one's experience.

Within the "Symphonie Fantastique," however, this awareness dissolves instantly—when the girl appears.

2. The Beloved's Arrival

This particular happening outshines indeed the salience of earlier, natural imagery, but in grossly unexpected fashion. When the artist first sets his gaze upon the woman, who is to become—or, more appropriately, *becomes* simultaneously with his notice—an object of stunning adoration, a rupture occurs, transforming both the symphony itself and, inextricably, the "episode" delineated.¹⁰ One might say of Berlioz's preceding measures, however, that they are comprised of geminate phrases. From measure twenty-eight to forty-five the composition remains doleful, nebulous, yet largely sedate in tone; enduring five separate collisions.

⁸ Kierkegaard, Søren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 133. Print.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 15. Print.

Arpeggiated flutes and clarinets overlap a mid-range, unison string melody, yielding a precarious counterpoise devastated irregularly¹¹ by venomous irruptions. These five incursions, ascending in volume, swoop in and disrupt the listener with lurid vertigo; the effect becomes like watching someone run continuously into a sharp object. At measure forty-six there rings forth a low and ominous note: precisely A-flat, which is conceived together by cellos and basses. For three whole measures it is sustained—quite alone during a period of near-silence—until she appears.

Her presence is announced by an unthinkable change in orchestration: among a generous trove of instruments, the strings are taken upward as both range and frequency of notes played increase. Not only is allurements thrust upon the listener at this time, so too is mitigation, and herein lies double irony. First, in placing the beloved directly opposite a series of nausea-inducing jolts, Berlioz negates the listener's expectations. One is incapable, having undergone this consecution, of anticipating such a lofty development, but just here is she revealed nonetheless. Secondly, whatever hopefulness one gains from her arrival soon proves transitory as the episode unravels and she then mutates into that individual upon whom a macabre design pours out. Against the listener's youthful optimism, Berlioz partially uncovers the beloved's fate by placing her scarcely ahead of gruesome imagery. What suggests a reversal is actually the incitement for magnification. The aforementioned incursions are venomous not only in immediate effect, but also in their foreboding nature.

With regard to the beloved herself, one may re-double the irony of Berlioz's presentation. By measure forty-nine the composer has led one through a sequence of quotidian imagery—assuming one interprets the country workers and, wrongly, the day's beginning as such—only to betray a truly extraordinary vision. The artist catches his first glimpse of the beloved within a rural landscape,¹² which provides a contrast for her beauty, making it inordinately pronounced. Thus is she instantly mollifying, a nearly angelic vision delivered by rapid bow strokes in high range. All common scenery gets subordinated to her presence: the beloved is a striking vision, walking along a gravesite undeterred. —This image draws additionally from the latter irony of foreshadowing expressed above, whereupon it converts itself into the second form pertaining to the beloved's demeanor. It must be said that

¹¹ Specifically at measures: 29; 35; 37; 39; and 44.

¹² This is indicated by the (relatively) brief period separating measure forty-nine from the imagery examined previously (her *proximity* to the country scenes), as well as Berlioz's lack of significant rhythmic alteration (a shift into urban territory would surely require an increase in tempo).

she is even more compelling while juxtaposed with baleful phrases (the succession which ushers her in); and yet, for her sake, one wills further ruination. A repetition of the *incursions* would thwart her looming misfortune, if the existent measure were devastated, then finished off like those before her, (and the beloved would indeed choose a removal from the episode over what truly awaits), but instead she remains—yes, like a rose among thorns, a sanguine creature oblivious to the artist's threat. Hence the beloved appears proportionally fragile with each upsurge in charm: a portrayal quite befitting the symphony's design.

3. The artist's initial reaction—development of the ideal

Measures sixty-one and sixty-two contain an unhindered, flaming vision of the beloved which distinctly elevates her to an almost peerless level. The artist has fixed his eyes upon her from a short distance; he now steadily approaches the beloved in order to affirm the beauty he rapidly identified. Along with the increased proximity, a consuming revelry springs forth, and the artist consequently glorifies her person to a measureless extent. A full-orchestra crescendo bursts upward, then withdrawals antithetically into pianissimo. Following this exchange is an eruptive crescendo which reaches fortissimo before vanishing suddenly, without a decrescendo. Barring the added nearness itself, how might one explain the intensity of the second crescendo? To be sure, his advancement clarifies this progression a great deal, especially with regard to its disappearance—which informs one that he passed the beloved and only just lost her sight—and yet there is another feasible option. Given the modest, somewhat isolated environment, she could readily have noticed the artist moving toward her, whereupon one envisions a meeting of the eyes. Naturally, such an occurrence satisfies well the listener's hopes; but for the artist, the possibility alone of seeing her will suffice.¹³

Berlioz's next measure leads to even broader, compositional deviation. A pizzicato interchange gets overridden by a full-orchestra whose tempo is fast, exactly twice the speed of all previous measures. Until now the "Symphonie Fantastique" had maintained an irregular pulse of generally long beats, however variable in substance. The consecution which fills measures sixty-four to seventy-one though, assumes a deliberate rhythm that timpani hits embed. Having understood that the beloved ruptured his internal state, the artist now grapples with this awareness—each striking of timpani corresponds to an obstinate effort to rid himself

¹³ This shall be treated in the second movement.

of the beloved's vision. Just as the compositional structure of the one-note-suspension marked earlier intensification of her bearing, this rhythmic emphasis notifies one that she has gone beyond the realm of the particular.¹⁴ It is disquietude—arising with first discernment of infatuation—that the beloved impels when seized by his mind's eye. The artist's purpose of ejecting her from recollection, given that it necessitates multiple attempts, is not a determined one either at start or finish—indeed, the words *allegro agitato e appassionato assai*¹⁵ hardly capture his resolve, but do epitomize the artist's inner turmoil.

According to Kierkegaard, the “melancholiac” is always “quite irritable and, despite this irritability as well as because of it, in a state of continual self-contradiction.”¹⁶ One may lend this portrayal to he who is infatuated as well, for under such circumstances, the contradiction is specifically that he favors bewilderment *and* its opposite: understanding. If the bursts of timpani represent attempts to forget the beloved, then surely the pizzicato interchange attests to mindfulness of her. These two progressions are so diametrically opposed that clearly they are in contradiction with one another. And one harbors disquietude concerning infatuation only insofar as the change appears significant enough to alter one's very being. Therefore, Berlioz's rhythmic emphasis illustrates that the artist is enamored of his beloved, while distressed simultaneously about losing a predictable way of life (one that he *understands*); chasmed are the gates of defense, thrown from their hinges to lurch mutinously, and yet he summons all hands to repair. But if the artist had not willed a repetition of his crisis—wherein he is quite persistent!—the beloved's next and final elevation, which demonstrates the loss of his familiar, internal state, could not have made its entrance.

This sort of difficulty occurs whenever romantic feelings arise, for once noticed, they are a change requiring much adjustment. The artist reacts with such ferocity, however, because of the disorder awaiting him. One always takes it violently at first, because the ideal vision is essentially a change so great that one can *never* adjust to it. Even as he grapples (repetitively) with infatuation, one senses that already it is far too late. The desperate whirlwind of strings ending at measure seventy-one reveals that his suffering has increased only to continue.

¹⁴ Meaning that now she is an object of recollection, a continual vision, as opposed to merely a passing sight.

¹⁵ Cone, Edward T. *Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 55. Print.

¹⁶ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Repetition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 180. Print.

Flutes and violins generate a theme of “melancholic reverie” in unison at measure seventy-two.¹⁷ Here the melody is rather stoic, and thus suitable for the affliction developed; yes, the *idée fixe* has its brilliance not under aesthetic valuation, but instead within a rare capacity to evoke the melancholic sentiment, which suggests the artist’s new mode of being. Berlioz writes in his *Programme* that “whenever the beloved image appears before the mind’s eye of the artist it is linked with a musical thought whose character, passionate but at the same time noble and shy, he finds similar to the one he attributes to his beloved.”¹⁸ Despite protraction of her occupancy, the listener discerns no additional qualities with respect to the beloved, except of course that she is very beautiful. Indeed, for the whole of thirty measures, which encompass the *idée fixe*, one learns only of the artist’s condition while holding the beloved “in his mind’s eye.” Why does it happen this way? She is not given distinct attributes strictly because she has now surpassed the particular. That is to say, the beloved eclipses virtually all limitations of temporality by assuming its highest precipice: the ideal. Such a high degree of melancholia would never emerge from recollecting someone actual, much less so quickly after seeing her, and the lack of precise characteristics only bolsters this awareness. The *idée fixe* currently reveals nothing apart from the ideal vision—that Berlioz’s artist is stricken with the disorder.

4. Comparison with two additional figures, regarding the ideal emergence

He appeared more vigorous and handsome than usual; his large glowing eyes were dilated—in short, he seemed to be transfigured. When he told me that he had fallen in love, I involuntarily thought that the girl who was loved in this way was indeed fortunate...He was sufficiently occupied with himself, was too restless to sit down but paced swiftly back and forth. His gait, his movement, his gestures—all were eloquent, and he himself glowed with love...I could not resist stealing an almost enamored

¹⁷ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 23. Print.

¹⁸ Ibid.

glance at him now and then, for a man like that is just as enchanting to the eye as a young girl.¹⁹

Kierkegaard's descriptions unfailingly convey the *young man's* perception of the beauty that ensnares him. One appreciates the girl's charm which excites such fervidity, while recognizing once more that no specific features are provided. Like the artist in Berlioz's symphony, the young man is "sufficiently occupied with himself," and so his beloved's enchantment is visible only through analysis of his condition. Her effect upon him is well known, but one hears nothing as to her true character. One must therefore identify what kind of being would gain such a dramatic form of love. The girl's magnitude is obfuscated by this presentation, insofar as it must be discovered within the young man's reaction, but surely it is not lessened or fragmented. On the contrary, his "transfigured" state attests to the ideal, that paradoxical enormity which scatters all known traits in unbounded ascent—she is not given distinct attributes strictly because she has surpassed the particular.

Just as lovers frequently resort to the poet's words to let the sweet distress of love break forth in blissful joy, so also did he...His eyes filled with tears, he threw himself down on a chair, he repeated the verse again and again. I was shaken by the scene. That he was melancholy, I knew very well—but that falling in love could affect him in this way! ...During all this, a remarkable change took place in him. Now I easily grasped the whole situation. The young girl was not his beloved: she was the occasion that awakened the poetic in him and made him a poet. That was why he could love only her, never forget her, never want to love another, and yet continually only long for her.²⁰

Upon first glance, one might conclude that Kierkegaard's young man has poeticized the girl in seeking literary triumph. But is such achievement reachable when deliberately pursued? The young man's conduct demonstrates otherwise. In "throwing himself down on a chair," the young man lays open the raw wound of discrepancy: he loves not an actual person, and therefore rejects normal enjoyment. His poetic ability stems from total helplessness and,

¹⁹ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 134-135. Print.

²⁰ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 135-138. Print.

precisely because he lives *for* the girl rather than with her, a worldly relationship is unthinkable. Kierkegaard's error in presuming "that the girl loved in this way is indeed fortunate,"²¹ stands analogous to that of Berlioz's listener during the *idée fixe*. A melancholic sentiment enkindles hope within one that the young man (and Berlioz's artist) could somehow avert the ideal and its countless obstructions, for the girl's sake, but, alas, this is quite false. Once cognizant of his burden, Kierkegaard's young man begins to withdraw from her.

Have I become blind? Has the inner eye of my soul lost its power? I have seen her, but it is as if I had seen a heavenly revelation, so completely has her image again vanished from me. In vain do I exert all my soul's power in order to conjure up this image. If I ever get to see her again, then I shall recognize her immediately, even though she were standing among hundreds. Now she has fled away, and my soul's eye vainly seeks to reach her with its longing.²²

In comparison to the young man, *Johannes'* nascent departure from his beloved is unwanted; however, the impetus behind each case remains unaltered. Johannes strains to "conjure up her image" as a result of the illimitable affect *Cordelia* produces; his ceaseless failure is engendered by the ideal. Cordelia is likened to "a heavenly revelation," which lets fall his ideal conception of her, and permits one to ascertain the symptomatic nature of Johannes' forgetfulness. It is quite suitable for a person so "deeply and fervently in love"²³ to suffer a recollective loss in terms of the beloved's physical appearance. Corporeality belongs, after all, to the realm of the particular. When someone forgets the exact image of the girl who is loved, often this difficulty unveils that her *influence* is truly what enraptures him.

Her head is perfectly oval, she bends forward a little, whereby her forehead, which rises pure and proud without any external indication of intellectual faculties, becomes higher. Her dark hair clings tenderly and softly about her brow. Her face is like a fruit, every transition is voluptuously rounded, her skin is transparent, like velvet to the touch; that I can feel with my eyes. Her eyes—

²¹ Taken from the previous, indented passage.

²² Kierkegaard, Soren. *Diary of a Seducer*. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 27. Print.

²³ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Repetition*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 136. Print.

well, I have not yet seen them, they are hidden behind lids armed with silken fringes that curve like hooks, dangerous to him who seeks to meet her glance...No doubt she mentions her address, but I do not want to hear it. I do not want to deprive myself of the surprise; I shall surely meet her again in life, I shall recognize her, and she perhaps will recognize me.²⁴

Together with Johannes' palpable confidence lies recognition of ideal supremacy; his poetic greatness has its origin in Cordelia's sweeping force that propels attempts at description. One may glimpse the ideal within his very words, for its absence connotes a method ill-disposed to poetry, namely prosaic observation. Nothing of the latter category exists within this passage, to be sure. More importantly, however, Johannes' self-restraint upon witnessing Cordelia emphasizes her dominion over spectators bound to poetic exertion. Instead of giving chase to Cordelia, which doubtlessly is expected, he thinks only of "leaving her undisturbed in her happiness."²⁵ For Johannes, the ideal must initially be granted its arrant power to consume all fortunate observers. If she were merely an object for possession, Johannes surely would not have withdrawn himself, content with the possibility of meeting her again.

Second Movement—"Un bal"

5. The Setting of Pursuit

A seething course of low-range phrases commences the second movement, before giving way, just as apprehension ensues, to a *festive* atmosphere. After thirty-seven measures a bright, aureate melody emerges from the strings, bestowing a waltz. Replacing the unsettling is an impression of gentility and merriment. This celebratory theme gains valor with measure fifty-four, as the harp casts mingling images of suitors and ladies-in-waiting. Berlioz's artist now finds himself "in the midst of the tumult of a party," where others strive to form or augment connections in a manner *remotely* similar to his, given that few nourish awareness of the

²⁴ Kierkegaard, Soren. Diary of a Seducer. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 18. Print.

²⁵ Ibid.

ideal.²⁶ One envisions him, not closely among the suitors, who felicitously approach, but removed—now to one side, now in front of them; his urgency to behold once more the ideal vision severs anonymity.²⁷

I have witnessed trysts the total impression of which was almost revolting, although the girl was lovely and the man handsome; in such cases the meeting itself was far from being beautiful, although no doubt it seemed so to the lovers...It distresses me when I see a man on such an occasion become so discomposed that he suffers an attack of delirium tremens from mere love.²⁸

Without question, the artist's readiness to disclose such conviction would appear quite loathsome to Johannes. Not unwarranted is the phrase "delirium tremens" as regards description of his conduct, for the artist's desperate search hardly indicates composure. Furthermore, this scarcely propitious encounter lacks two distinguishing components of the tryst: mutuality and arrangement. The artist's fervidity is attributable solely to the *possibility* of meeting his beloved, which renders it all the more "revolting." Indeed, his entire response to witnessing contradicts Johannes' insofar as she is not "left undisturbed in her happiness" but vehemently pursued upon first opportunity; and for this he requires only that she *might* appear.

²⁶ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 23. Print.

²⁷ It goes without saying that only the beloved may tempt one stricken with this disorder back into the presence of others—for witnessing those whose love is successful deeply injures one so unfortunate.

²⁸ Kierkegaard, Soren. Diary of a Seducer. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 24. Print.

Part Two: Demonic Contemplation

Third Movement—"Scene aux champs"

6. Natural Precedence Revisited

At the outset of movement three, one hears immediately from the English horn a reclusive melody, open in texture and predictably composed, whose notes are produced identically by the oboe, thereafter. With the ensuing alternation comes a feeling that both instruments are situated asunder, given their deficiency in volume and overall frailty. Berlioz's *Programme* confirms this suspicion: "finding himself one evening in the country, he [the artist] hears *in the distance* two shepherds piping a *ranz des vaches* in dialogue."²⁹ Vital to understanding his circumstances is the present landscape, for it reveals just how isolated the artist has become. He sits on the edge of a rise overlooking a pastoral expanse, its grasses tall and opulent, behind which lays a forest. On either side of him the shepherds call to one another, barely outside the artist's horizon, and their somber melody passes him gradually, like birds crippled in flight. Against an environment whose vastness nearly forces invisibility—augmenting his obscure image—the artist manages to comprehend this exchange as redolent of the beloved. Still he imagines that she is not fully beyond his grasp, and thus capable of *answering* him. Yes, though perhaps surprising to the listener, his attending the shepherd's *ranz des vaches* momentarily restores hope for dialogue to actually occur.

Before now the artist permitted himself nothing of the solace granted uniquely within such a pristine landscape. Once he devises a listening role for the beloved, however, awareness of "the quiet rustling of the trees gently brushed by the wind" begins seeping into his enthrallment, "giving a more cheerful color to his ideas."³⁰ Flutes and violins illustrate the artist's recovery in unison after nineteen measures, which progresses just as haltingly as the former melody, thereby suggesting that his newfound possibility mirrors the last. Specifically, he becomes so consumed with thoughts of capturing the beloved's attention—in place of merely

²⁹ Cone, Edward T. *Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 23. Print.

³⁰ Ibid.

seeing her again—that improvement is veritably restricted. But this skeletal arrangement nevertheless offers an emboldening, if consolatory, impression. Established mainly by pizzicato cello and viola, the remedy is not altogether different from that within a familiar Kierkegaard passage.

When the reaper makes his scythe ring and entertains himself with this prelude, which becomes the day's and the task's refrain—then the young girl also appears...Then the young girl appears and walks around in wonderment (who marvels most, the girl or the trees!), then she crouches and picks from the bushes, then skips lightly about, then stands still, lost in thought...Then at last my mind finds repose. Happy girl! If a man ever wins your love, would that you might make him as happy by being everything to him as you make me by doing nothing for me.³¹

Such instances are compared easily to the general “repose” one finds amidst the countryside, despite their specialized elements. In other words, one’s “happiness” before a remote environment goes not outweighed by that inspiration *from* its precise occurrences, even those unusual or marvelous. On the contrary, they are *dependent* upon one another. The central realization nature’s mollifying influence affords is that the sun has risen. All of the scenery one perceives has recently been illuminated, at the cost of a great struggle. Insofar as they possess the unstained quality of a morning’s arrival, pastoral landscapes foster this awareness, and with it recollection of the beginning itself.

Sunrise allows for experience. What follows must therefore be deemed, in the strictest terms, an extra. To speak of experience as contingent, however, along with the sunrise permitting, is not merely to address everyday tasks, but also the visions surpassing them. Kierkegaard’s perception of the young girl, who “walks around in wonderment,” though stirring and evocative, remains purely an extra; and like most extras, its magnitude falls beneath that of its predecessor.

Finally, nature’s mollifying influence breaks through at measure forty-four, with all its force and potential. *All* strings and woodwinds merge now to achieve a layered effect, undoubtedly the symphony’s fullest sound, hitherto. Through use of harmonic thirds and sixths

³¹ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 168. Print.

a feeling of unprecedented relief emerges, so quickly and with such emphasis that, were one not immediately transformed, one might almost think it shocking. For a passing moment the listener wonders if he himself caused this effect, if really there was no *listening* at all but only projection of his wishes for recovery; it is just that powerful.

And yet the best description here is still emboldening, if consolatory. Indeed, nature grounds one in a consolatory sense by revealing that one's experience is *vouchsafed*, rather than promised. Before a remote environment, one sees clearly that one is an un-essential part of something much greater. Ah yes....the sunrise, God's will to overthrow night, the Creation of this world, to begin with; so much the true meaning of which one cannot fathom has taken place. In comparison with it all, one's own self and one's *later* experiences cannot be anything. But still to know that one is alive!—that one *was* created, and given light to see—is nothing less than emboldening.

7. The searing prod of anguish

But as soon as this influence announces itself, it gets replaced by another. An alarming crescendo slams forth at measure forty-eight, comprised of woodwinds and strings in unison. As it sweeps from piano to forte with a force nearly equal to that of nature's mollifying influence, one realizes that nothing truly has changed. From the beginning, the artist's recovery was conditional upon his outlook toward the beloved, and now one senses a competition between them, which Berlioz's summary of this movement confirms: "This mingling of hope and fear, these ideas of happiness disturbed by black presentiments, form the subject of the Adagio."³² By the rupture of his former self; by anxiety over where she might be leading him; by his unsuccessful attempts to possess the beloved these "black presentiments" are caused. These are the struggles of the ideal vision. But since it is always true of great suffering that no single event or regret is to blame, one must say that an inexplicable combination of these reactions thrusts itself upon him—a searing prod of anguish.

The most tragic aspect of this difficulty, however, is that the artist does not allow nature's mollifying influence to fully affect him. Having realized that one is nothing before the magnitude of God's creation, and yet somehow before one's eyes the sun has risen to reflect His act of creation, one becomes grateful for experience itself—for all experiences, good or bad.

³² Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 25. Print.

Such is nature's utmost potential. If the artist looked beyond his suffering long enough for this effect to occur completely, he would gain renewed strength to face such difficulty; he would become emboldened to outlast his anguish. When one is grateful for all that one experiences (knowing that one could easily have been given nothing), one's capacity to endure moments of distress increases tremendously. But the artist clings to anxiety surrounding his beloved, instead.

In the hills of Bergen, Norway there is a type of slug, jet black in color, nearly one foot long and several inches wide, that one seems never to happen upon within those places which might aesthetically be considered normal for its dwelling. Indeed, one rarely sees them on neighborhood yards and streets, or beside a major road, but as soon as one reaches a lovely wooded area or meadow, it seems one cannot look down without noticing one of these slugs close by; on the contrary, one must then *keep* one's eyes down, so as to avoid stepping on them. —This of course prevents one to a large extent from appreciating the landscape. But despite how often one sees them, one is never quite prepared for the next slug. Within these pristine hills, they are always unfitting and grotesque, like some horrible blemish one hopes to be imagining. This is just how the artist appears now. In turning his back upon its natural influence, the artist degrades himself from a tortured man, seeking refuge amid pastoral scenery, to one who *violates* its capacity to mollify. *His anguish poisons the very ground beneath him and the rise he was on begins to crumble.* Again, this suffering reveals only that more looms ahead.

8. Essential comparison with Kierkegaard's figures, concerning their response to the ideal vision

I am not fond of vertigo, and this state is to be recommended only when one has to do with girls who can gain poetic glamour in no other way. Besides, one easily misses the real enjoyment, for too much confusion also is harmful. With her it would completely lose its effect. In a few draughts I would imbibe what might have

refreshed me a long time, yes, what with peace of mind I might have enjoyed more fully and richly.³³

Of what does Johannes speak in describing this “real enjoyment”? Precisely the ideal vision. Idealization is again a requirement for poetic greatness, and thus he scarcely refers to anything else as necessary for the “poetic glamour” of such enjoyment. Also, one notices again a poetic *richness* to Johannes’ words that only idealization makes possible. But why does his romantic disorder yield “enjoyment” rather than anguish? Because he is aware, at least to a certain extent, that Cordelia has been idealized. Johannes knows that for him she is not the object of a normal love, and so he cannot use ordinary means to *pursue* her.

Proof of this knowledge lies within the following statement: “In love I certainly am, but not in the ordinary sense, and in that respect one must be very cautious; since there always are dangerous consequences; and one is that way just once.”³⁴ The “dangerous consequences” of not being “cautious” when one loves another in this idealized fashion seem to include “vertigo”, “too much confusion”, and other ruinous happenings far worse than a lack of “real enjoyment.” Johannes always presents the damaging effects of “exaltation”³⁵ alongside his own “real enjoyment.” This suggests that he does not fear misguided enjoyment—or wish so strongly to appreciate Cordelia “fully and richly”—so much as that he knows what might befall him, if he pursued her in a normal way. His “pure idealization” is desired because it carries not the risk of Johannes *losing himself* in “vertigo” or “confusion.” Indeed, throughout the *Seducer’s Diary*, his “modus operandi”³⁶ is instead to enjoy the benefits of Cordelia’s “poetic glamour” as it *presents itself* to him. The only common practice of “seduction” one might say he employs, is that of making himself appear worthy of Cordelia’s affection.³⁷

My love cannot find expression in a marriage. If I do that, she is crushed...The moment it becomes a matter of actuality, all is lost, then it is too late. The actuality in which she is supposed to have her meaning remains but a shadow for me...It would end with my fumbling for her as if I were grabbing at a shadow or as if I

³³ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Diary of a Seducer*. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 79. Print.

³⁴ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Diary of a Seducer*. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 72. Print.

³⁵ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Diary of a Seducer*. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 79. Print.

³⁶ Kierkegaard, Soren. *Diary of a Seducer*. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 80. Print.

³⁷ “I am completely successful with the aunt, she regards me as a sedate and steady person whom it is a pleasure to entertain and who is not like our dandies.” Kierkegaard, Soren. *Diary of a Seducer*. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 62. Print.

stretched out my hand after a shadow. Would not her life then be ruined?³⁸

Once more the central point here is that Kierkegaard's young man recognizes that his love "cannot find expression," and so he chooses to withdraw from his beloved to avoid "ruining her life." Less selfish than Johannes, the young man does not hope for moments of preternatural bliss—which the seducer receives temporarily on his own conditions³⁹—but looks instead to actuality, where anything real and lasting between him and the beloved "remains but a shadow." He loves the girl as few have ever loved someone, and yet he must disappear, for the relationship holds no other possibility—just the certainty of unhappiness. Neither the young man nor his beloved can actualize what he sees in her, simply because it is nothing which she herself possesses. In short, he loves not an actual person, and therefore rejects normal enjoyment. As Kierkegaard himself describes it, "he can be happy without her insofar as he can be happy at all, especially with the addition of this new element, and he breaks off."⁴⁰

9. The exhaustion of pursuit

In defiance of his own affliction, Berlioz's artist gains no such distance for himself. When it surfaces at measure eighty-seven, a progression of bassoon, cello and bass *forewarns* that the artist's pursuit of his beloved (begun in Movement Two) has continued—affecting him more drastically as time persists. In low range, its evocation towers above the surrounding phrases, instilling a theme which at first seems exalted, if slightly formidable, then grievous and increasingly malefic as it starts dragging out. One cannot decide whether to feel surprisingly moved or disturbingly oppressed. This progression carries a weight of vexation nearly proportional to its more literal kind.

But when, after two measures, the *idée fixe* forces its way in like a distant memory, the real significance here comes to light. Even as it emerges—with all the melancholic beauty and

³⁸ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 201. Print.

³⁹ "The only reservation I make is the private opinion that every love affair lasts half a year at the most and that every relationship is over as soon as the ultimate has been enjoyed." Kierkegaard, Soren. Diary of a Seducer. New York, NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, 2006. 80. Print.

⁴⁰ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 184. Print.

fragility observed hitherto—one senses that, against the last progression, it does not truly belong. —This is precisely what gives the *idée fixe* renewed significance. Juxtaposed with a towering progression, it appears more *vulnerable* than ever, and this compelling quality has meant only suffering, for the artist. There is no exception, here. At its most grandiose point, the “towering progression” still contained a kind of underlying exhaustion, which in response to the *idée fixe*, only increases. An exhaustion—as if he has grown so weary of pursuit that even the beloved’s image now spurs apprehension. An exhaustion. —Now he seems to falter just when holding the beloved “in his mind’s eye.”

Were this symphony an opera, one might define the existent progression a recitative, and the *idée fixe*, its aria. Such a comparison is not inappropriate, given the dramatic nature of what unfolds.

The symphony has now reached its crisis. Either he must *give up* his beloved, succumb to the exhaustion of pursuit, or defy exhaustion and project himself toward her once more.

10. His grotesque reaction

As this operatic exchange continues, one’s suspicion grows that a departure from the beloved is not, for Berlioz’s artist, truly possible. Viola and violins join the trio of bassoon, cello and bass at measure one-hundred-two, intensify the recitative by their added timbres—and extinguish the *idée fixe*. Yet this loss is but a harbinger of those to come. In four measures, the symphony reaches its most chilling point. The strings newly combined ensnarl themselves into an aggregate that rings out from within, as if imploding, before it crescendos to full orchestra fortissimo. After two gruesome bashings, a shrill burst of diminished sevenths destroys all sense of rhythm at measure one-hundred-eight, ascending chromatically. Now at last, the artist can be heard *screaming* out Berlioz’s question—“What if she were deceiving him!”⁴¹

Never in serene understanding does such witless fury culminate. And since no evidence suggests that he and the beloved have actually encountered one another past the first movement, one may easily pronounce the artist’s rage devoid of reason. So how could she be deceiving him? By calling him forth again to pursue her, despite all failed attempts? Yes, that does capture the artist’s burden; yet if so, only the beloved’s *image* can be held responsible.

⁴¹ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 25. Print.

The ideal vision is strictly to blame. —Nevertheless, one fears that she, like Banquo, may suffer the ultimate price for influence alone. This paranoia of deceit—sharpened by general anxiety from the “black presentiments”—forces him well past the breaking point. The dissonant chords die away at measure one-hundred-eleven, and after one measure, a single cello note rings forth, low and ominous, the forced state of calm which resolves a dilemma. What follows is silence—not a mere lapse in the symphony, or like a natural break in dialogue, but a silence that suspends the present moment so entirely that one cannot focus on anything else, while at the same time, realizing that nothing has happened. In essence—and by implication—this silence is nothing short of *funereal*.

By th' clock 'tis day, and yet dark night strangles the traveling
lamp. Is't night's predominance or the day's shame that darkness
does the face of earth entomb when living light should kiss
it?⁴² ...It will be rain tonight.⁴³

Part Three: The Consequences of Pursuit

Fourth Movement—“Marche au supplice”

Convinced that his love is unappreciated, the artist poisons himself with opium. The dose of the narcotic, too weak to kill him, plunges him into a sleep accompanied by the most horrible visions. He dreams that he has killed his beloved, that he is condemned and led to the scaffold, and that he is witnessing *his own execution*.⁴⁴

⁴² Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. New York, NY: Random House, 2009. 37. Print.

⁴³ Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. New York, NY: Random House, 2009. 48. Print.

⁴⁴ Cone, Edward T. *Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 25. Print.

When next the artist glimpses his beloved (during the symphony), one learns that in his mind, she is already dead. Yes, she is dead—and the artist killed her—in his mind. Between the third and fourth movement, he “poisoned himself and dreamt of killing his beloved.” —Since one *knows* the beloved purely through his imagination, this is a shattering loss. One has encountered only the “ideal being” Berlioz’s artist “imagines in his dreams”—and now within a different, more brutal dream, he has killed her. She *is* dead. That sanguine creature was by the artist en-sanguined.

For influence alone, she paid the ultimate price. —Now her murderer must pay it for *allowing* this influence (the ideal vision) to instill a state of moral insanity, for if killing the beloved was a dream, the artist still attempted suicide. Indeed, he “poisoned himself with opium”—so “witnessing his own execution” might be punishment for *this* as well as contemplating murder.

Such impulsive scrutiny is not un-common for one whose demon remains the ideal. This burden is horrific compared with others, strictly because it does not strictly exist. —Even Kierkegaard’s young man fails to contain a violent outburst.

One day he came up to me; his dark passions had attained total dominance...he cursed life, his love, the girl he loved...now he had spoiled everything...even the joy of maintaining her pride and making a goddess of her.⁴⁵

Yes, he “spoiled everything”—that is precisely why he leaves. Herein lies the contrast between “dark passions attaining total dominance” and *destroying* instead one’s whole existence. However fatal and protracted anguish seems, the gap from pain to suicide is infinite. —But the artist crossed that threshold long ago.

He was un-equal to the realization that idealization contradicts life’s nature—so he provokes, through his disorder, the furthest possible extreme. —The artist *never* admits defeat, though his “misplaced melancholy high-mindedness”⁴⁶ is itself a defeat. He lets obsession rage until it culminates in murder-suicide.

So when next the artist glimpses his beloved, he is about to die.

He is witnessing his own execution. The procession moves forward to the sounds of a march that is now somber and fierce,

⁴⁵ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 139. Print.

⁴⁶ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 216. Print.

now brilliant and solemn, in which the muffled noise of heavy steps gives way without transition to the noisiest clamor. At the end of the march the first four measures of the *idée fixe* reappear, like a last thought of love, interrupted by the fatal blow.⁴⁷

Having borne an un-expected sequence of triumphant blasts (presumably the crowd's delight in witnessing a "future" death), surrounded by the fitting, yet *cataclysmic* rush of strings, he awaits the "fatal stroke" before a mass of gluttonous observers. One perceives him thrown among executioners, one to another, while they ready yoke and blade, transporting him across the platform to crescendos by full-orchestra. At measure one hundred sixty-four, just as the fell-stroke is about to land, the weapon drawn—she interrupts, sweetly and with longing; the beloved image comes to focus one last time.

Clarinets alone play the melody, achieving instantly a positive suspension of the moment. She hovers gracefully before the artist, infusing recollection so vividly that he forgets his own concern—when the axe falls, leaving him headless. The artist's body, perhaps still clutched in rapture by the ideal vision, is left to *writhe* upon the stage, while his head rolls downward, offered to the roaring crowd.

"Great is the persuasiveness of death"⁴⁸—for in this case it reveals that *ideal* effects are boundless. During the last moment of his life, the beloved appears—as if she had not adequately shown her dominance by *causing* death! Even now she haunts the artist to affirm she will forever remain *above* him, and beyond his grasp.

Fifth Movement—"Songe d'une nuit de sabbat"

He sees himself at the sabbath, in the midst of a frightful troop of ghosts, sorcerers, monsters of every kind, come together for his funeral. Strange noises, groans, bursts of laughter, distant cries which other cries seem to answer. The beloved melody appears again, but it has lost its

⁴⁷ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 25. Print.

⁴⁸ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 176. Print.

character of nobility and shyness; it is no more than a dance tune, mean, trivial, and grotesque: it is she, coming to join the sabbath. —A roar of joy at her arrival.⁴⁹

The next and final stage of this “opium dream” is attending his own funeral. But this brings not that comforting voyeurism which the aged fantasize. Having slain his own beloved, the artist witnesses his last rites—in the underworld.

One pictures him within a claustrophobic space: a dark cavern, perhaps. Their clawed feet scratching at the floor, witches gather round his body, casting shadows gnarled by firelight.

Berlioz’s artist has fully transitioned (morally and physically) from light to darkness. Having repeatedly turned his back on nature’s mollifying influence (whose deep-rooted awareness of *beginning* is a repetition, and its return to self, perhaps the greatest repetition), he drowns in a black cave, gasping for breath impossibly.

The “distant cries” fade after twenty measures, and clarinets begin pouncing at notes from the *idée fixe*. This rendition is indeed “grotesque.” —It slithers in six-eight time, festering within the listener’s ears.

Berlioz’s artist watches these demonic creatures gambol about his corpse, mocking reverence for the beloved once “noble and shy” in a common “dance tune.”

This must be the ultimate insult to injury. At this point, he might—with self-deprecating humor—ask himself:

Is there not a repetition? Did I not get everything double?
Did I not get myself again and precisely in such a way that I
might have a double sense of its meaning?⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Cone, Edward T. Hector Berlioz: Fantastic Symphony. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971. 25. Print.

⁵⁰ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 220-221. Print.

Now the artist is doubly-aware of his absurd pursuit. Suffering the consequences (being executed) was excruciating—now he must withstand a grotesque parody of his actions.

He watches monsters desecrate his body in the darkness where he lead himself through demonic obsession with the un-attainable ideal. They mock his ignorance by exulting *her* in the manner that was itself his downfall.

This is most definitely “a repetition of the wrong kind.”⁵¹

As far from light as possible, his self-mutilating burial is complete. The sun will never rise again for Berlioz's artist.

But idealization is again a requirement for poetic greatness. The point being sufficiently made that since idealization is *essentially* poetic, one cannot—least of all through obsessive pursuit—make it actual, one might turn at last to the beloved herself.

“A roar of joy at her arrival.” —Perhaps this is indeed the best response, when one learns “it is she, coming to join the sabbath.” —The onslaught of “dithyrambic joy”⁵² from all instruments (at measure twenty-nine) matches just that sentiment extolled within the final lines by Kierkegaard's young man.

Praised be feminine generosity! Three cheers for the flight of thought, three cheers for the perils of life in service to the idea, three cheers for the hardships of battle, three cheers for the festive jubilation of victory, three cheers for the dance in the vortex of the infinite, three cheers for the cresting waves that hide me in the abyss, three cheers for the cresting waves that fling me above the stars!⁵³

So long as there is poetry, one suffers the ideal.

Idealization *is* suffering because it remains, by definition, in conflict with reality.

⁵¹ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 169. Print.

⁵² Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 228. Print.

⁵³ Kierkegaard, Soren. Repetition. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983. 221-222. Print.

To what extent *should* the poet suffer? How much of his life is inherently sacrificed? Should he sacrifice everything? How important is the actual compared to poetry? Can someone mitigate this damage, remaining poetic? If so, how?

These pages were for the most part composed under a full moon, which is altogether fitting, given the madness it required.

Perhaps it is best to leave such questions un-resolved.

Soldiers in Queue



Sprite



Contributors

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